

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1174

S E C R E T CAIRO 0078

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG US

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN COMPLAINTS ABOUT PRESS BRIEFINGS

1. FAHMY COMPLAINED YESTERDAY ABOUT WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE US LEAKS RE EXCHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE. HE CLAIMED THE PRESIDENT HAD SPOKEN TO ME ABOUT SUBJECT. WHEN I TOLD HIM THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID NOTHING ABOUT THIS, FAHMY REPLIED THAT HE KNEW THE PRESIDENT HAD MEANT TO DO SO.

2. I TOLD FAHMY THAT, AS HE KNEW, WE HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY CAREFUL TO SAY NOTHING THAT MIGHT EMBARRASS THE PRESIDENT. I WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY HIGH LEVEL USG LEAKS, BUT AS WE HAD SAID EARLIER, PRESS SPECULATION MUST BE EXPECTED. FAHMY COUNTERED THAT SOME OF THE RECENT ARTICLES IN AMERICAN PRESS SUGGEST THEY WERE BASED ON BRIEFING BY SOMEONE VERY MUCH IN THE KNOW. RECENT GWERTZMAN ARTICLE IN NY TIMES AND HERALD TRIBUNE WAS A CASE IN POINT. THE PRESIDENT WAS VERY UPSET ABOUT IT. THERE HAD ALSO BEEN OTHER ARTICLES, BUT WHEN ASKED, HE WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE SPECIFICS. HE AGAIN REQUESTED THAT WE SAY NOTHING TO THE PRESS WHICH WILL EMBARRASS THE PRESIDENT IN HIS RELATIONS WITH OTHER ARAB NATIONS. THIS IS ESSENTIAL IF THE PRESIDENT IS TO CONTINUE TO BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE A FURTHER SINAI ARRANGEMENT.

3. I TOLD HIM THERE WERE OTHER POSSIBLE SOURCES FOR GWERTZMAN'S ACCOUNT AND I HOPED NEITHER THE PRESIDENT NOR HE WOULD IN SUCH
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INSTANCES JUMP TO THE CONCLUSION WE ARE CULPABLE. WE HAVE NOT AND WILL NOT KNOWINGLY PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE PRESS, WHICH MIGHT BE POLITICALLY HARMFUL TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO OUR JOINT EFFORTS.

4. COMMENT: EGYPTIANS, AND ESPECIALLY THE PRESIDENT, REMAIN VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT LEAKS FROM ANY QUARTER THAT GIVE ANY DETAILS OF OUR RECENT EXCHANGES ON NEGOTIATIONS RE FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI. URGE THAT DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN TAKE GREAT CARE TO AVOID ANY SLIPS.
EILTS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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